

Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday Celebration Commission Meeting

Wednesday August 26, 2015

Commission Members: Bruce Ervin, Barbara Fuqua, Nicole Griffin, David Hummons, Lily Kleinlein, Dianne Shewmaker **Staff:** Michael Shermis

The meeting began at 5:33 pm.

Minutes: David made a motion to approve the July minutes as written, Barbara seconded, all approved.

Treasurer Report: Michael shared an update on how the financials of commissions work. We have money dedicated to the event in January, but as usual we will need to continue fundraising to support event costs as we do not have city funds as part of our "budget." Commission members asked questions about how we can track our finances and "budget" for the event. Michael said he will continue to provide clarifications at future meetings.

Power of Words/Wisdom Circles: Nicole shared that she facilitated the event at Tri North on Monday with Rev. Joe Emerson. The classes asked great questions and the conversation was lively. The kids were fascinated by the history he shared. Michael shared that the Taliaferros were supposed to speak with the last 3 classes, but due to a last minute medical emergency were unable to attend. They ended up using a video recording of the earlier sessions with Rev. Emerson with these classes. Even with the hitch, the evaluations from the event were overwhelmingly positive. The last event with Rev. Emerson will take place at Fairview. Michael said that the Director from the library attended the event and is helping coordinate tickets for the schools to be able to attend the Power of Words event. Michael said that there are several events leading up to the Power of Words: a wisdom circle facilitated by the city, an event focused on social justice, and the library is hosting several events.

2016 Theme/Speaker: Michael shared several updates regarding the speaker: The contract for Brittany Packnett is ready to send. Michael met with Michelle Moyd and Amrita Myers, both Professors of History at IU. They are interested in Brittany staying until Tuesday so she could visit classes during the day and then be part of an event on Tuesday evening, focused on IU students. They originally wanted to work with her on Monday, Martin Luther King Day, but since there aren't classes they would struggle to get students to attend. The City of Bloomington and MLK Commission would not be able to pay or assist in planning this second day, but we can help by coordinating with Brittany on whether she's interested in staying a second day. Michelle and Amrita are interested in helping with getting the word out and gathering students, but not on coordinating the logistics of the second day and suggested Union Board as a partner. Nicole suggested Black Student Union as the hosting partner. She will check with them to find out if they are interested in facilitating/hosting a Tuesday event. The extra day would mean another night of hotel/meals, and probably additional speaking fees. Michelle and Amrita are confident they can raise the extra money. David wanted to clarify that they would need to find other sources for funding than those we use, and would have to be careful that the second event doesn't compete with our event on Monday. Michael said that their event would be significantly different than ours, and they plan to raise funds from several schools at IU. Nicole asked if Brittany has agreed to the second day yet, and Michael said he's still coordinating with her assistant to find out if she would stay for \$1000 more. A new contract would be slightly complicated because the first day would be through the City, the second day would be through IU. Michael also shared that DEMA is changing the way they approve requests for

financial support. He is looking into how we can best coordinate with them not only for MLK events but other City-related events as well.

Nicole asked why Michelle and Amrita are going to the effort of a Tuesday event instead of partnering with Unity Summit on Monday. Michael said that might be a good idea because it would lead well into our evening event, and it would all fit within the original contract. Nicole asked Michael to check into Unity Summit as a possible option instead of a Tuesday event.

Michael brought up the suggestion of “tabling” at our celebration on MLK Day. We could invite groups to set up tables with materials and opportunities for service. Nicole said that people are often moved to service on MLK Day, and thought it would be a nice addition. Dianne said that NAACP would most likely want to have a table. David said the MLK Commission should have a table. Bruce said we would need to set up criteria about how to choose which organizations can table in case we have an overwhelming amount of interest, so Michael is going to work on creating some criteria.

AME Church Collaboration: Dan Enslow wasn’t present, so we will discuss this next time he attends.

Commissioner Attendance: Michael said Aurea resigned from the commission, so we have a vacancy. If we know of anyone, we can refer them to the City Council to apply for an appointment.

Liaison Reports:

Commission on the Status of Black Males: David shared that their focus for the year is minority health-including all underrepresented populations and using a wide definition of “health.” They are looking for partners to coordinate educational initiatives, health fairs, and more.

NAACP: Dianne said that the NAACP hasn’t met this summer, but they are meeting in September. The Freedom Fund Banquet is October 10.

Announcements:

- Michael said that historically, in August we created a video contest committee. Nicole said that would have included Bev Smith or another rep from MCCSC. Michael thinks we aren’t likely to get much help from the person in that role now. David said beyond the administration approval of anything we want to send out, we still need to get buy-in from schools and teachers. Michael has contacts for the schools that he can use after we decide what our contest will look like. He wants to connect with them earlier this year. Nicole suggested we send fliers out in October, right before fall break. She asked if Michael could update the fliers by the Sept. meeting, so we could finalize with a theme/new deadlines. Michael said we could look into the new Teen Center at MCPL, and whether they are open to hosting any sessions for video editing. Barbara said that we might find interest is higher because we’ve been in the schools with Rev. Emerson.
- Nicole suggested we create a theme related to “March,” since that’s the Power of Words theme. Dianne suggested “March On!” Commission members should come ready with theme ideas to next month’s meeting.
- David recommended we look into a piece from the Washington Post on Julian Bond and the history of the Civil Rights movement, beyond the years highlighted in the 1960s.

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 6:28.